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Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07
NSAE-00 /044 W
----------061740Z 049614 /46
R 061141Z MAR 77
FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 799
INFO SECDEF WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 AMMAN 1271

FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MASS, PFOR, JO, US
SUBJECT: APRIL 1977 JMC CONFERENCE

REF: SECDEF 250008Z FEB 77 FROM ASD/ISA

1. WE RECOGNIZE PROBLEMS RAISED BY REFTEL STEM FROM GENUINE CONCERN ABOUT DIFFICULTIES WHICH HOLDING APRIL 1977 JMC WOULD CAUSE FOR DOD AND NEW ADMINISTRATION. IN PARTICULAR WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT JORDAN'S FINANCIAL PROBLEMS. HOWEVER, GIVEN PRESENT ATMOSPHERE IN OUR POLITICAL RELATIONS, WE BELIEVE THAT IT WOULD CAUSE SERIOUS, INDEED OVERWHELMING DIFFICULTIES, IF WE WERE TO SUGGEST NOT HOLDING APRIL 77 JMC. KING IS ALREADY BADLY STUNG BY WASHINGTON POST STORY. THE ROOT OF HIS CONCERN IS WHETHER OR NOT THE NEW ADMINISTRATION EXPECTS TO MAKE SIGNIFICANT CHANGES IN ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH JORDAN. THE SECRETARY'S VISIT HELPED TO ALLAY SOME OF THESE CONCERNS. HOWEVER CONTINUING REPETITION OF STORIES ATTACKING THE KING PERSONALLY IN THE UNITED STATES PRESENTLY HAS REVIVED THE SPECTRE OF POSSIBLE POLITICAL CHANGES IN THE OFFING FOR THE JORDANIANS. AS A RESULT, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT IT
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IS CONCEIVABLE TO CHANGE HOLDING THE JMC AS A POLITICAL FACT. TO DO SO WOULD BE TO CONVEY A POLITICAL STANCE WHICH WOULD BE DELETERIOUS IN THE EXTREME TO OUR RELATIONSHIP.

2. HOWEVER WE ARE VERY MUCH CONCERNED ABOUT THE DIFFICULTIES WHICH HOLDING A JMC WILL CAUSE THE

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DEFENSE DEPARTMENT AND THE WASHINGTON MILITARY COMMUNITY
IN GENERAL. THE JORDANIANS KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THAT
WE ARE OURSELVES REVIEWING WORLDWIDE ASSISTANCE AND
ARMS SALES POLICIES AND PEACE-MAKING STRATEGY IN THE
MIDDLE EAST. AT THE SAME TIME, WE HAVE A LONG HISTORY
OF RELATIONSHIPS DEDICATED TO MOVING THE JORDANIANS
IN THEIR MILITARY PLANNING AND ACTIVITIES ALONG A
TRACK WHICH WE CONSIDER WILL BE HIGHLY COMPATIBLE
WITH THE PUBLIC STATEMENTS BY OFFICIALS OF THE NEW
ADMINISTRATION OF WHICH WE ARE ALREADY AWARE. IN
THIS CONNECTION THE FOLLOWING ARE PERTINENT:
(A) WE HAVE LONG URGED THE JORDANIANS TO PREPARE
A COMPLETE FIVE-YEAR DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR JAF. WE
HAVE MADE IT CLEAR TO THEM THAT THE PRODUCTION OF
ANOTHER EQUIPMENT LIST-MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WOULD NOT
SERVE THEIR INTERESTS. CINC JAF PROMISED IN WASHINGTON
IN OCTOBER 1976 TO HAVE THE PLAN READY IN JANUARY
1977. THE PLAN HAS BEEN FINISHED AND IS BEING
TRANSLATED FOR PRESENTATION AT THE SPRING JMC. OUR
JOINT WORK AT THIS MISSION AND IN DOD HAS FORCED THEM
TO FOCUS ON PRIORITIES FOR MANPOWER AND FUNDING FOR
THE NEXT FIVE YEARS. WE FEEL THIS IS A SIGNIFICANT
MILESTONE IN OUR JOINT INTERESTS IN OUR ATTEMPT TO
MODERATE JORDANIAN APPETITIES IN MANPOWER AND EQUIP-
MENT AREAS. THE PLAN SHOULD BE PRESENTED AND
CRITIQUED AT THE JMC AND INSOFAR AS IT MEETS OUR
EXPECTATIONS, JORDANIANS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO
PROCEED. WHERE THERE ARE SIGNIFICANT GAPS OR AREAS
FOR IMPROVEMENT, THEY SHOULD BE QUIETLY POINTED OUT.
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JORDANIANS KNOW THAT NO ONE AT THE JMC MEETING CAN
MAKE A COMMITMENT TO FULFILL JAF'S PLANNED OBJECTIVES.
(B) TRADITIONALLY THE HOLDING OF THE JMC HAS BEEN
AN INDUCEMENT TO JAF TO BRING ITS FINANCIAL OBLIGA-
TIONS UP TO DATE. CINC JAF HAS TOLD THE AMBASSADOR
THIS IS HIS CURRENT INTENTION. IF OUR LATEST INFORMA-
TION IS CORRECT, JAF WILL SHORTLY TRANSFER $15 MILLION TO
DOD TO COVER ALL BACK DEBTS, EXCLUSIVE OF THOSE TO
BE FUNDED ON FY 76 FMSCR. JORDANIANS ALSO BELIEVE
THAT IF THEY CANNOT GAIN THIRD PARTY SIGNATURE TO
CREDIT ARRANGEMENTS, THEY WILL SOON BE REQUIRED
COMPLETELY TO RESTRUCTURE THEIR FY 77
GA PROGRAM TO ALLEVIATE THEIR FINANCIAL CONDITION.
THEREFORE, IF THIRD PARTY GUARANTEES ARE NOT FORTH-
COMING BY THE TIME OF JMC, WE WOULD INVITE INSTRUC-
TIONS FROM STATE AND DEFENSE TO TELL THE JORDANIANS
THAT AT THE JMC THEY WILL BE EXPECTED TO CARRY OUT
THIS RESTRUCTURING.
(C) THE JORDANIANS ARE NOW AWARE OF FY 78 LEVELS

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AS SUBMITTED TO THE CONGRESS. THEY UNDERSTAND THAT
THE CONGRESS OFTEN MAKES CUTS. NEVERTHELESS A REVIEW
OF THEIR PROPOSED GA AND FMS PROGRAMS IN ACCORDANCE
WITH THESE LEVELS WOULD IN NO WAY COMMIT THE ADMINISTRA-
TION. IT WOULD, HOWEVER, PERMIT A USEFUL US JORDANIAN REVIEW.
PRIMARILY, DOD INTEREST SHOULD FOCUS ON THE APPROPRIATE-
NESS OF INDIVIDUAL LINE ITEMS AND CURRENT PRICE AND
AVAILABILITY DATA.

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ACTION NEA-10

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3. OTHER THAN ABOVE, WE AGREE THAT THERE ARE NO
SIGNIFICANT ISSUES TO DISCUSS AT THE JMC. HOWEVER,
JORDANIANS HAVE ALWAYS CONSIDERED JMC TO BE A COURT-
OF-LAST-RESORT FOR ARMY AND AIR FORCE ISSUES AND
ITEMS WHICH THEY CONSIDERED TO BE INAPPROPRIATELY
CONCLUDED THROUGH CABLE TRAFFIC OR FOR WHICH RESPONSES
HAVE BEEN DELAYED. JORDANIANS HAVE GENERALLY CONSIDERED
JMC MEETINGS TO BE HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL AND GO AWAY
REASONABLY SATISFIED. FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE WE DO NOT
CONSIDER THIS TOO HIGH A PRICE TO PAY FOR OUR HIGHEST
GRANT AID RECIPIENT AND A LONG-TIME POLITICAL ALLY
AND FRIEND OF THE UNITED STATES.

4. NEVERTHELESS WE ARE DEEPLY CONSCIOUS OF THE FACT
THAT THE JMC DOES REQUIRE, AS PRESENTLY CONSTITUTED,
A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION FROM NUMEROUS SENIOR DOD
OFFICIALS. WE BELIEVE IT COULD BE SIGNIFICANTLY
RESTRUCTURED TO ATTEMPT TO REDUCE THIS BURDEN AND
STREAMLINE PROCEEDINGS. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT SUCH
A RESTRUCTURING AND FORMAT WOULD EFFECT THE
POLITICALLY IMPORTANT QUESTION WHICH IS THE FACT OF
HOLDING THE JMC, NOT ITS ORGANIZATIONAL MODALITIES.

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5. WHILE WE HAVE NOT YET CONSULTED WITH JAF REGARDING A PROPOSED AGENDA, ON THE BASIS OF OUR OWN KNOWLEDGE
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OF WHAT THEY ARE LIKELY TO RAISE, WE BELIEVE THAT VERY SHORT OPENING AND CLOSING PLENARY SESSIONS WOULD SUFFICE WITH ONE WORKING SESSION EACH FOR DSAA, ARMY AND USAF. ALLOWING FOR ADEQUATE TIME LAPSES BETWEEN WORKING SESSIONS AND THE FINAL PLENARY, WE BELIEVE MOST OF THE PROBLEMS LIKELY TO BE RAISED COULD BE SETTLED IN THE INTERIM.

6. IN ADDITION, WE EXPECT CINC JAF WILL ACCOMPANY KING ON HIS VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES AND IS LIKELY TO WISH TO COME A WEEK OR SO IN ADVANCE IN ANY EVENT. HIS PRINCIPAL PURPOSES WILL BE TO MEET INDIVIDUALLY WITH KEY DOD PERSONNEL. WE DO NOT SEE ANY EASY WAY OF DISCOURAGING THIS INTENTION, AND IT IS ONLY LIKELY TO BE REINFORCED ON HIS PART SHOULD WE SUGGEST CANCELLING JMC FOR APRIL 77. BIN SHAKER, AS YOU KNOW, HAS ALWAYS BEEN RELIED UPON BY THE KING AS A CLOSE ADVISOR AND STRONG PERSONAL FRIEND. HIS TWO PRINCIPAL ASSISTANTS DURING THE VISIT ARE LIKELY TO BE MAJOR GENERAL MAJALI, ACS (OPERATINGS/PLANNING) AND MAJOR GENERAL KURDI (COMMANDER RJAF). FOR LATTER IT WILL BE FIRST VISIT TO THE UNITED STATES IN HIS CAPACITY AS AIR FORCE COMMANDER.

7. IN SUM OUR MAJOR REASONS FOR HOLDING JMC AT THIS POINT ARE POLITICAL. THERE ARE SOME COMPELLING MILITARY PURPOSES ALSO TO BE CONSIDERED. WE WILL DO ALL POSSIBLE TO TRY TO SHIFT FOCUS TO REDUCE INVOLVEMENT OF SENIOR OFFICIALS, BUT IN RETROSPECT BELIEVE SERIOUS DAMAGE TO OUR RELATIONSHIP WOULD BE INCURRED IF SOMETHING CALLED JMC IS NOT HELD IN US IMMEDIATELY PRIOR TO KING'S PLANNED APRIL VISIT TO WASHINGTON.
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